United Nations A/RES/72/162

General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2018

Seventy-second session
Agenda item 72 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2017

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/72/439/Add.1)]

72/162. Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto: situation of women and girls with disabilities

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous relevant resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 70/145 of 17 December 2015, as well as relevant resolutions of the Human Rights Council and of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions,

Recalling also the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interrelatedness of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and the need for persons with disabilities to be guaranteed the full enjoyment of their rights and freedoms without discrimination,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[1] the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[2] and the Optional Protocol thereto,[3] the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,[4] the Convention on the Rights of the Child[5] and all other relevant international human rights instruments,

Recalling the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action,[6] the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[7] the Beijing

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.
[3] Ibid., vol. 2518, No. 44910.
[4] Ibid., vol. 1249, No. 20378.
[5] Ibid., vol. 1577, No. 27531.
[6] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.
[7] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5–13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

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Declaration[7] and Platform for Action[8] and the outcome documents of their review conferences,

Welcoming the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[10] which is inclusive of persons with disabilities and in which Member States pledged to leave no one behind, and acknowledging that Member States, while implementing the 2030 Agenda, should, inter alia, respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without discrimination of any kind,

Welcoming also the inclusion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls as a stand-alone goal and in the implementation of all goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the recognition that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is crucial to making progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets which contribute to the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities,

Welcoming further the fact that, since the opening for signature of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto on 30 March 2007, 160 States have signed and 174 States and 1 regional integration organization have ratified or acceded to the Convention and 92 States have signed and 92 States have ratified the Optional Protocol,

Noting with appreciation the work and activities that have been and continue to be undertaken in support of the Convention and towards the fulfilment and mainstreaming of the rights of all persons with disabilities, particularly through, inter alia, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, other human rights treaty bodies, the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action,

Expressing concern that women and girls with disabilities are subject to multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, which limit their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others, particularly with regard to the equal access of persons with disabilities to education and employment, access to health-care services, including for sexual and reproductive health, access to justice and equal recognition before the law, the ability to participate in political and public life, live independently and be included in the community and have the freedom to make their own choices,

Expressing concern also that structural or systemic discrimination is reflected in hidden or overt patterns of discriminatory institutional behaviour, discriminatory cultural traditions, discriminatory and negative social norms and attitudes and unequal power relations that view women and girls, in particular women and girls with disabilities, as subordinate to men and boys, and underscoring that States should take all appropriate measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women,

Expressing concern further that stereotypes, stigmatization and discrimination heighten the risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse, against women and girls with disabilities compared to women and girls without disabilities, as well as men and boys with disabilities,

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[7] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[8] Ibid., annex II.

[10] Resolution 70/1.

Expressing concern about the low labour force participation rate of women with disabilities, who face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and encounter structural, physical, communicational and attitudinal barriers hindering their access to and participation in the workplace on an equal basis with others,

Recognizing the contribution of family members towards ensuring the full enjoyment by women and girls with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others,

Concerned that the continuing lack of reliable statistics, data and information on the situation of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and global levels contributes to their exclusion in official statistics, policies and programmes, and in this regard recognizing the need to intensify efforts to build the capacity of Member States, and to strengthen data collection and analysis and disaggregate data by disability, sex and age to support the development of evidence-based policies and programmes inclusive of women and girls with disabilities,

Recognizing the need for States to accelerate the development, implementation and mainstreaming of strategies that respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all persons with disabilities, including women and girls, to the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights without discrimination by adopting legislation, policies and programmes that are inclusive of all women and girls with disabilities, and affirming that realizing their human rights requires their full, effective and meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of public, political, economic, cultural, social and family life, on an equal basis with all others,

Recognizing also that information and communications technologies have shown their potential to strengthen the exercise of human rights, and that they can create conditions enabling women and girls with disabilities to fully enjoy their human rights and can also contribute to their empowerment,

Stressing the importance of closely consulting and actively involving persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls, through their representative organizations in the development and implementation of legislation and policies that impact their lives and in other decision-making processes concerning issues relating to persons with disabilities,

Acknowledging the importance of taking measures to raise awareness of the rights of women and girls with disabilities in order to eliminate stereotypes, prejudices and violence, including harmful practices which seriously violate and impair or nullify the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women and girls with disabilities and which constitute a major impediment to their full, equal and effective participation in society, the economy and political decision-making,

1. *Calls upon* those States that have not yet done so to consider signing and ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[2] and the Optional Protocol thereto[3] as a matter of priority;

2. *Encourages* States that have ratified the Convention and submitted one or more reservations to it to review regularly the effect and continued relevance of such reservations and to consider the possibility of withdrawing them;

3. *Requests* United Nations agencies and organizations, and invites intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to continue to strengthen efforts undertaken to disseminate accessible and easy-to-understand information on the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto, including to children and young people to promote their understanding, and to assist States parties in implementing their obligations under those instruments;

4. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of women and girls with disabilities and the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto[11] and the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities;[12]

5. *Emphasizes* the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant sustainable development strategies, and encourages States to apply a human rights-based approach and to intensify their efforts to advance the rights of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[10] consistent with their international obligations;

6. *Urges* States to take steps to eliminate multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities through repealing discriminatory laws, policies and practices and to take all effective measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all rights stipulated in the Convention;

7. *Calls upon* States to adopt effective measures to provide women and girls with disabilities access to the support they may require to exercise their legal capacity to have the freedom to make their own choices on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life;

8. *Also calls upon* States to strengthen efforts to empower women and girls with disabilities and enhance their participation and promote leadership in society through taking measures to address all barriers that prevent or restrict the full and equal participation of women and girls with disabilities, including in the government and public sector, the private sector, civil society and all branches and bodies of the national monitoring system of the Convention, and working to ensure that women and girls with disabilities are closely consulted and actively involved, through their representative organizations, in the design, implementation and monitoring of all legislation, policies and programmes which have an impact on their lives;

9. *Encourages* States to review and repeal any law or policy that restricts persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, from their effective and full participation in political and public life on an equal basis with others, including forming and joining organizations and networks of women in general and of women with disabilities;

10. *Also encourages* States to provide support to existing organizations and promote the creation of organizations, including civil society organizations, and networks of women and girls with disabilities, and to promote and support women with disabilities in taking leadership roles in public decision-making bodies at all levels, recognizing the importance for States of having an open, inclusive and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures on women and girls with disabilities;

11. *Calls upon* States to strengthen and intensify efforts to take deliberate, concrete and targeted steps to fully realize the equal enjoyment of the right to education, including ensuring access to an inclusive education system at all levels for all women and girls with disabilities, eliminating legal, administrative, financial, structural, social and cultural barriers that hinder their equal enjoyment of the right to education on an equal basis with others, and to facilitate their full and equal participation in education by taking appropriate steps through the provision of information in accessible and alternative communication formats, reasonable accommodation and other support as required;

[11] A/72/227.

[12] A/72/133.

12. *Also calls upon* States to develop policies and measures that promote access to education for persons with disabilities and to strengthen education systems that are fully inclusive of girls with disabilities to reduce the risk of social exclusion and poverty, which could have long-term implications for their capacity and opportunity to participate in labour markets;

13. *Further calls upon* States to implement effective measures to protect the right of women with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others in the public and private sectors, to ensure that labour markets and work environments are open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities, and in this regard to take positive measures to increase the employment opportunities of women with disabilities and eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including recruitment, retention and promotion, and the provision of accessible, safe, secure and healthy working conditions, in consultation with relevant national mechanisms and organizations of persons with disabilities;

14. *Calls upon* States to take effective action to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence, exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence and abuse, against women and girls with disabilities without delay, including by:

(a) Adopting, strengthening and implementing legislation on violence against women to ensure that it expressly prohibits violence and provides adequate protection for women and girls with disabilities against all forms of violence, including violence perpetrated by support providers, health-care providers and others in positions of authority, as well as domestic violence, including intimate partner violence, and ends impunity and adequately penalizes offences involving physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence occurring in families, in institutions and carried out by support providers;

(b) Taking all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of gender and/or impairment by any person, organization or private enterprise, ensuring access to justice and accountability mechanisms and remedies for the effective implementation and enforcement of laws aimed at preventing and eliminating discrimination and violence against women and girls with disabilities, taking into account the multiple, intersecting and aggravating forms of discrimination, and protecting victims and witnesses from violence while investigating, prosecuting and punishing those responsible, including private actors, and providing access to redress and reparations where human rights violations or abuses occur;

(c) Ensuring that services and programmes designed to protect women and girls from violence are accessible to women and girls with disabilities, in particular those living in institutionalized settings, who are the most vulnerable to violence, including by ensuring that facilities are accessible and mainstreaming disability in materials and training courses addressed at professionals working on violence against women;

(d) Ensuring that women and girls with disabilities and their families have access to a range of support services, information in accessible formats and education on how to prevent, recognize and report instances of exploitation, violence and abuse against women and girls with disabilities, as well as how to ensure that children with disabilities have a safe and supportive family environment;

15. *Also calls upon* States to accelerate efforts to eliminate harmful practices, including child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and to repeal legislation and regulatory provisions that allow the administration of forced medical procedures such as forced sterilization, forced abortion and forced contraception and

to ensure that any medical procedure or intervention is not performed prior to the free and informed consent of women and girls with disabilities;

16. *Urges* States to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters, to address violence against women and girls, providing timely and appropriate reintegration and rehabilitation assistance to persons with disabilities while ensuring that their specific needs are addressed, such as access to health-care services, psychosocial support and educational programmes;

17. *Calls upon* States to realize the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, including sexual and reproductive health, for women and girls with disabilities on an equal basis with all others, in particular by providing access to inclusive and accessible disability-, gender- and age-appropriate information, support and reasonable accommodation so that they can access quality and affordable and universally designed health facilities, and urges Governments to promote and protect the human rights of all women and girls, including the right of women to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence, and to adopt and accelerate the implementation of laws, policies and programmes that protect and enable their enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including reproductive rights, in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development,[7] the Beijing Platform for Action[9] and the outcome documents of their review conferences, on an equal basis with others;

18. *Also calls upon* States to accelerate efforts to scale up scientifically accurate age-appropriate comprehensive education that provides adolescent girls and young women with disabilities, in and out of school, in a manner consistent with their evolving capacities, with appropriate direction and guidance from parents and legal guardians, with information in accessible and alternative communication formats on sexual and reproductive health, gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, physical, psychological and pubertal development and power in relationships between women and men, to enable them to build self-esteem and informed decision-making, communication and risk reduction skills and develop respectful relationships, in full partnership with young people, parents, legal guardians, caregivers, educators and health-care providers;

19. *Further calls upon* States to collect and analyse data disaggregated by income, sex, race, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant to national contexts to assist with the identification and eradication of barriers and all forms of discrimination, especially multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, that prevent women and girls with disabilities from enjoying all the rights stipulated in the Convention, and to guide policy planning and improve data collection systems for adequate monitoring and evaluation frameworks on the implementation of the Convention and the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to women and girls with disabilities;

20. *Urges* States and other relevant stakeholders, including national human rights institutions, to continue to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by, inter alia, supporting the disaggregation of data by disability, sex and age for specific indicators, on the basis of the Washington Group short set of questions on disability and other data collection methodologies, where relevant, to assist States in measuring the achievement of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 associated targets and programming policies in the context of the Goals;

21. *Encourages* States, United Nations entities and relevant international organizations, inter alia:

(a) To ensure that international cooperation is disability- and gender-sensitive and inclusive, including through the implementation of disability markers to monitor the implementation of programmes, and the collection of data and statistics on persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, as well as other international frameworks;

(b) To support and promote international cooperation and assistance and enhance partnerships and coordination, including South-South cooperation, among themselves and the active participation of civil society organizations, including women's organizations and organizations of women and girls with disabilities and other key stakeholders in strengthening means of implementation, including mobilization of financial resources and technical cooperation for the implementation of the Convention and the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focusing on women and girls with disabilities;

22. *Invites* the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to address and engage in an interactive dialogue with the General Assembly annually, under the item entitled "Promotion and protection of human rights", as a way to enhance communication between the Assembly and the Committee;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on the rights of persons with disabilities with a focus on the issue of accessibility and the challenges to the implementation of the Convention in that regard, in consultation with relevant United Nations agencies, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Children's Fund, taking into account the views of relevant stakeholders and using existing available materials, and to include a segment on the status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto;

24. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that the Office of the High Commissioner has adequate resources for the fulfilment of its tasks with respect to its work on the rights of persons with disabilities.

73rd plenary meeting
19 December 2017